GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:263
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2000
AIDS CONTROL PROGRAMME
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned `women`s organisations cry foul over AIDS programme` as appearing in the Statesman dated January 18, 2000;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein and the reasons for their resentment;

(c) whether the Government have since taken any decision to review the AIDS control programme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (b) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 263 FOR ANSW ON 14.03.2000

Some representatives of women`s organisations have expressed concern on the component of Targeted Interventions in the National AIDS Control Progamme Phase-II alleging that interventions with sex workers would raise their self esteem and lead to demands for legalizing the sex trade. They have also urged the Government to take up programmes for rehabilitation for women who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The Secretary (Health) had wide ranging discussions with these women`s groups and also other women`s organisations who are working in this field. In his meeting Secretary (Health) clarified that the approach of Targeted Interventions adopted in the NACP-II is part of the public health policy which aims at arresting the infection at source. The Secretary (Health) clarified that the objective of Targeted Interventions is to empower and enable marginalized communities, in which sex workers are also included, to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and to prevent the further transmission of the infection into the general population.

It was clarified that apart from sex workers other marginalized communities such as intravenous drug users, truckers, migrant labour, street children and prisoners were included in the Targeted Interventions approach. To accommodate the concerns of the women`s organisations about inadequate focus on rehabilitation, it was also decided in the meeting, that the Ministry of Health will be ready to fund some pilot projects for rehabilitation of victims of sexually exploitation. However, such pilot projects would have to be undertaken under the overall supervision of the nodal Ministry i.e. Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development..

In a subsequent brainstorming session convened by the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to discuss various issued involved in the National Programme for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, there was general endorsement of this approach.

The National AIDS Control Programme Phase-II has been formally launched in December, 1999 with a total budget of Rs.1425 crore. This programme has five components:

(i) Priority Targeted Interventions for group at High Risk

(ii) Prevention intervention for the general community.

(iii) Low cost AIDS care.

(iv) Institutional strengthening

(v) Intersectoral collaboration.